

is—he's sending this retired four-star general over—are you concerned about our military policy in Iraq that it's not doing enough to control the insurgents?

The President. Look, I think what you're beginning to see is a—an assessment of how to make sure our policy dovetails with the elections and the post-election period. You see, our policy all along has been: We'll help these people get to the elections, and there will be elections. And then once the elections take place, we look forward to working with the newly constituted Government to help train Iraqis as fast as possible so they can defend themselves. See, part of a successful strategy is one that says there'll be elections and the political process will be going forward but one in which the Iraqis assume more and more responsibility for their own security. And that's precisely why the assessment team is going to Iraq, to make sure that at this historic moment in the history of Iraq, there is a focused, determined strategy to help the new Government and the new and the—the new Government to stand up the forces necessary to defend themselves because ultimately the success in Iraq is going to be the willingness of the Iraqi citizens to fight for their own freedom.

Q. So you're not dissatisfied?

The President. I think we're making great progress. We're having elections on January the 30th. It's going to be an historic moment. I suspect if you were asking me questions 18 months ago and I said there was going to be elections in Iraq, you would have had trouble containing yourself from laughing out loud at the President. But here we are at this moment, and it's exciting times for the Iraqi people. And it's so exciting, there are some who are trying to intimidate people from going to the polls.

And I appreciate—listen, our military is doing great work over there.

Q. And the Sunnis?

The President. Well, I talked to President Yawr the other day. He's a Sunni. I said, "How's your campaign going?" He said, "It's going fine." He's out there trying to convince people to vote for him. There are Sunnis throughout the different tickets and slates, and we, of course, hope everybody votes. And our job is to try to provide as much secu-

rity along with the Iraqis to give people a chance to express their will. And no doubt about it, there are people trying to kill people who want to vote. That's—and they make it clear, "If you vote, we'll kill you." But it's very important to understand why they're doing that, John. They're doing that because the thought of a democracy in that part of the world is the most frightening thing to the terrorists. They cannot stand the thought of freedom in their midst. And there's a reason, because free societies are societies that actually listen to the will of the people. The people get to decide the course of their—of the history of their country, not a few tyrants who are willing to use brutality in order to set the direction of the country. And we're going to stand with those who love freedom. And we'll stand with those who want to vote.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Ghazi al-Ujayl al-Yawr of the Iraqi Interim Government. Reporters referred to Lt. Gen. Thomas F. Metz, USA, commander, Multi-National Corps—Iraq; President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; King Abdullah II of Jordan; and Gen. Gary E. Luck, USA (Ret.).

Executive Order 13369—President's Advisory Panel on Federal Tax Reform

January 7, 2005

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and to assist in reforming the Federal Internal Revenue Code to benefit all Americans, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment. There is established the President's Advisory Panel on Federal Tax Reform (Advisory Panel).

Sec. 2. Membership. (a) The Advisory Panel shall be composed of up to nine members appointed by the President.

(b) The President shall designate one member of the Advisory Panel to serve as Chair and one member to serve as Vice Chair.

Sec. 3. Purpose. The purpose of the Advisory Panel shall be to submit to the Secretary

of the Treasury in accordance with this order a report with revenue neutral policy options for reforming the Federal Internal Revenue Code. These options should:

(a) simplify Federal tax laws to reduce the costs and administrative burdens of compliance with such laws;

(b) share the burdens and benefits of the Federal tax structure in an appropriately progressive manner while recognizing the importance of homeownership and charity in American society; and

(c) promote long-run economic growth and job creation, and better encourage work effort, saving, and investment, so as to strengthen the competitiveness of the United States in the global marketplace.

At least one option submitted by the Advisory Panel should use the Federal income tax as the base for its recommended reforms.

Sec. 4. Administration. (a) The Department of the Treasury shall provide, to the extent permitted by law, administrative support and funding for the Advisory Panel. The Advisory Panel is established within the Department of the Treasury for administrative purposes only.

(b) The Chair of the Advisory Panel shall convene and preside at the meetings of the Advisory Panel, determine its agenda after consultation with the Vice Chair, and direct its work. The Advisory Panel shall have a staff headed by an Executive Director who shall be selected by the President and report to the Chair.

(c) Members of the Advisory Panel shall serve without compensation for their work on the Advisory Panel. Members of the Advisory Panel who are not officers or employees in the executive branch, while engaged in the work of the Advisory Panel, may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law for persons serving intermittently in Government service (5 U.S.C. 5701 through 5707), consistent with the availability of funds.

(d) Consistent with applicable law, heads of executive departments and agencies shall provide to the Advisory Panel such assistance, including assignment or detail of personnel, and information as may be necessary for the Advisory Panel to perform its functions.

(e) The Advisory Panel may conduct meetings in appropriate locations throughout the United States to obtain information and advice from Americans of diverse backgrounds and experience and from a diverse range of American entities, including large and small for-profit and non-profit organizations, State, local, and tribal governments, and from other individuals and entities as appropriate. Public hearings shall be held at the call of the Chair.

(f) Insofar as the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.) (the "Act"), may apply to the Advisory Panel, any functions of the President under that Act, except for those in section 6 of that Act, shall be performed by the Secretary of the Treasury in accordance with the guidelines that have been issued by the Administrator of General Services.

Sec. 5. Report. The Advisory Panel shall submit to the Secretary of the Treasury a report containing policy options in accordance with section 3 of this order as soon as practicable, but not later than July 31, 2005.

Sec. 6. Provisions. (a) Nothing in this order shall be construed to impair or otherwise affect the functions of the Director of the Office of Management and Budget relating to budget, administrative, or legislative proposals.

(b) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity, against the United States, its departments, agencies, entities, officers, employees or agents, or any other person.

Sec. 7. Termination. The Advisory Panel shall terminate 30 days after submitting its report pursuant to section 5 of this order.

George W. Bush

The White House,
January 7, 2005.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register,
9:02 a.m., January 11, 2005]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on January 12.

**Remarks on the Nomination of
Robert B. Zoellick To Be Deputy
Secretary of State**

January 7, 2005

The President. I am so pleased that upon the recommendations of the Secretary of State Designee Rice that Bob Zoellick has agreed to serve as Deputy Secretary of State upon confirmation by the Senate. Condi Rice and Bob Zoellick will form one of the really strong, capable foreign policy teams our country has ever had.

I've known Zoellick for a long time. He's a—he is a fine public servant. I asked him to serve as our trade minister, and he did a fantastic job. And as he departs to the State Department, upon Senate confirmation, I want to assure the American people this administration is committed to free trade. I look forward to finding a replacement for Bob Zoellick that will be able to carry on our desire to spread free trade around the world.

In the meantime, I look forward to a quick confirmation for Condi and Bob so they can go over to the State Department and carry on the foreign policy of this administration. Thank you all very much.

Thanks for serving.

Ambassador Zoellick. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Glad you're going to do it.

Ambassador Zoellick. Thanks.

Secretary-Designate Rice. Mr. President—

The President. Good choice.

Secretary-Designate Rice. Thank you, sir.

The President. Thank you all. See you in Detroit.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:11 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

**Remarks in a Discussion on Asbestos
Litigation Reform in Clinton
Township, Michigan**

January 7, 2005

The President. Thank you. Thanks for coming today. Please be seated. We've got a lot of work to do here. *[Laughter]* Thank you for such a warm greeting, and I want to thank some of our fellow citizens for joining me here on the stage. We're about to have an interesting conversation on a vital issue that confronts our country, and that has to do with asbestos litigation. And I want to thank you all for joining us.

I think you're going to find their stories to be very interesting and very compelling as to why this country needs to act and to solve a problem. One of the reasons people run for office, or at least the main reason they run for office, should be to see problems and solve problems so that the country is better off because of our actions.

I want to thank Al Lorenzo and the good folks here at Macomb Community College for allowing us to use your beautiful facility. I believe that the community college system is a vital part of making sure that America remains a competitive place to do business. After all, one of the ways to ensure that our business sector is strong and viable is to have a workforce that is skilled—that is trained for the skills of the 21st century. And there is no better place than the community college system of America to provide those skills for jobs which actually exist. So thanks for having us here. I'm honored to be here.

Today I traveled from Washington on mighty Air Force One with four Members of the United States Congress from Michigan. I hope they came down to hear this presentation. I suspect they might have liked the accommodations. *[Laughter]* But I'm proud of all four. Congressman Mike Rogers is with us today. Thank you, Mike. Thad McCotter is with us. Congressman, thank you for coming. Joe Knollenberg is with us—Congressman Knollenberg. And finally, Congresswoman Candice Miller has joined us. Thank you, Candice. *[Applause]* It sounds like they've heard of you. That's good. And you brought along husband, Don. I appreciate